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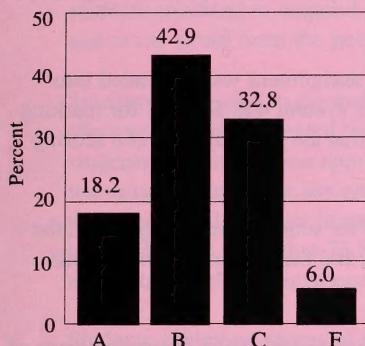


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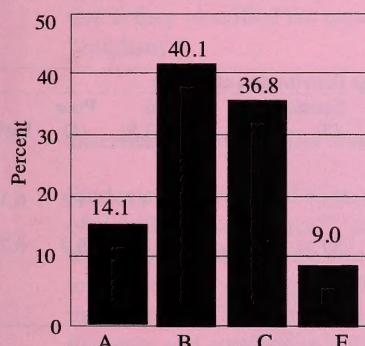
English 30

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1996

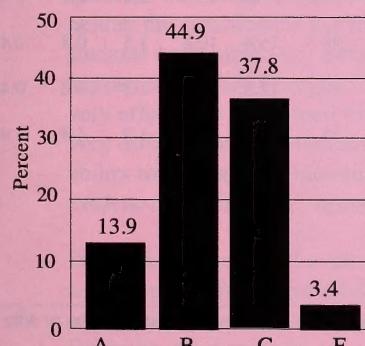
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the January 1996 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 8 855 students who wrote the January 1996 examination.

- 96.6% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 13.9% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Students who achieved the standard of excellence (80% or higher, or A) on the diploma examination demonstrated impressive competence in their writing. Students who achieved the acceptable standard (50% to 64% or C) showed often that they were able to use language well, but did not always sustain this ability.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 67.4%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 65.8%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 67.1%.

Part A: Written Response

Part A: Written Response is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the (3) **Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *English 30 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examination Program*, for the 1995–96 school year, which is available in all schools.

In January 1995, the single scoring category formerly used to mark the minor assignment was expanded into Thought and Detail, and Writing Skills. Also in January 1995, the two-marker system was adopted for marking Part A, which means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring scales. (See the following table.)

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark(%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores							
			Excellent (5)	Proficient (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Limited (2)	Poor (1)	Ins*		
Minor Assignment The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature, and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Thought and Detail	7.5	3.3	2.9	16.6	15.3	35.7	13.7	9.0	1.8
	Writing Skills	7.5	3.2	3.2	17.3	16.3	39.3	10.5	7.6	1.2
Major Assignment The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied in class by discussing theme and the literary techniques that the author uses to support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	Thought and Detail	12.5	3.9	2.8	14.0	11.5	29.0	17.8	15.9	2.8
	Organization	7.5	2.8	2.6	13.6	12.6	38.5	16.4	10.6	1.5
	Matters of Choice	7.5	4.1	2.6	14.7	11.9	42.1	12.8	8.9	1.3
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	4.6	3.4	16.6	13.7	35.2	12.5	10.0	1.9

***Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off-topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

Examiners' Comments

Reader's Response to Literature Assignment

This assignment is intended to focus the student as a reader on his or her own response to a text and a theme that are provided.

The selection, the poem “Horses” by Pablo Neruda, was accessible to all students. The assignment required students (readers) to respond to the poem in terms of the effect of significant experiences in people’s lives, and to use detail from the poem to support this response.

Students responded to the task in a variety of ways. Many stayed “inside” the poem and dealt only with the ideas and details presented there. Others chose to tie the idea in the poem to personal experience. Many students combined these approaches. For many students, the assignment appeared to serve as an effective warm-up for the major assignment in that they were already focused on the idea of significant experience as they proceeded to select literature as support for the Literature Composition Assignment. The marks (see table, p.2) show that 73.8% of the students received a score of **(3) Satisfactory** or higher for Thought and Detail on this assignment (87.5% achieved at or above the acceptable standard).

Students achieving scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(4.5 and 5) Excellent** were perceptive and focused in their personal response to the poem. Many of these students wrote of parallel personal experiences, occasions of epiphany. Those students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** were inclined to respond to the poem on a literal level, that is they identified the experience presented in the poem as a change rather than an “awakening” or “epiphany.”

Literature Composition Assignment

Students were required to respond to the question: “What idea does the author develop regarding the impact of significant experience?” In their responses, students chose a wide variety of literature. The nature of the topic required them to be selective; i.e., to limit their choice of experience and impact in order to discuss the topic effectively. Many students were successful in focusing their discussion on the relevant aspect of a literary work. There were many very good papers—focused, thoughtful essays that reflected a grasp of the literature and attention to the requirements of the assignment.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(4.5 and 5) Excellent** often recognized that neither the significance nor the effect of important life experience is obvious while it is happening. These students were often very astute in their observations of the way characters are affected by the subtlest of happenings. They were also highly aware of the writer’s craft in character development. Many students very effectively developed their theses by comparing characters responding to significant experiences in very different ways. Students at this level showed confidence in their use of language as well as in their ability to interpret the literature insightfully. Their discussions were effectively structured; their supporting evidence was carefully chosen and appropriate.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(3) Satisfactory** had no difficulty in selecting literature that applied to the topic. Often these students cited a “mistake” or bad choice made by a character as the significant experience. Student writing at this level was appropriately organized, clearly written, and generally correct. However, most students are either not using or are misusing apostrophes.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	81.1
2	C	87.8
3	A	83.4
4	B	82.4
5	A	54.8
6	A	89.0
7	B	68.3
8	D	68.6
9	A	54.0
10	A	72.1
11	B	69.0
12	C	58.8
13	A	58.4
14	D	60.5
15	C	74.7
16	A	61.5
17	B	56.0
18	B	86.5
19	C	68.1
20	C	81.3
21	D	64.3
22	B	81.5
23	B	90.3
24	A	71.0
25	A	79.9
26	B	69.8
27	D	67.8
28	C	88.4
29	A	66.4
30 ¹	Deleted	Deleted
31	C	79.0
32	B	61.8
33	C	50.1
34	B	61.4
35	D	80.6
36	A	43.7
37	B	83.5
38	C	87.9
39	D	82.0
40	A	69.6
41	D	56.0
42	B	65.7
43	B	40.8
44	D	60.9
45	C	83.0
46	B	68.4
47	C	83.8
48	D	35.9
49	A	67.2
50	C	61.7
51	D	64.7
52	A	63.6
53	D	74.9
54	B	53.4
55	C	60.5
56	D	70.5
57	D	57.2
58	C	76.3
59	A	82.6
60	D	72.3
61	C	78.6
62	B	68.5
63	C	66.7
64	D	67.2
65	C	80.8
66	A	69.1
67 ¹	Deleted	Deleted
68	C	55.5
69	D	63.7
70	D	73.9

Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1996 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	Total
Meanings	27, 46, 66	4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 23, 34, 48, 50, 54, 65, 68	2, 3, 13, 17, 18, 19, 24, 26, 38, 47, 49, 55	31 Items (22%)
Critical Response	25	1, 8, 21, 22, 32, 33, 37, 42, 43, 56, 57, 62, 64, 69	28, 29, 36, 44, 52, 53, 63, 70	23 Items (18%)
Human Experience and Values		9, 31, 39, 40, 51, 59, 60,	10, 11, 35, 41, 45, 58, 61	14 Items (10%)
Total	4 Items (5%)	37 Items (27%)	27 Items (18%)	68 Items (50%)

Subtest Results**

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 47.2 out of 68

Course Content

- Meanings: 21.6 out of 31
- Critical Response: 15.4 out of 23
- Human Experience and Values: 10.2 out of 14

* Questions 30 and 67 were deleted from the examination.

** Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results, because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

*Difficulty — percentage of students answering the question correctly

¹Questions 30 and 67 were deleted from the examination

Examiners' Comments

Standards

Following the marking session, a committee of English classroom teachers reviewed Part B: Reading to consider whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair.

The committee members commented that Readings I “Walter Karp” and V from “The Most Beautiful House in the World” are very difficult reading in terms of vocabulary and style, and of little interest to students. They also agreed that the remaining passages provided balance overall.

Deleted Questions

Questions 30 and 67 were dropped from Part B. Question analysis and teacher comments indicated that the alternatives in both questions provided more than one “correct” answer.

Detailed Discussion

The results of Part B: Readings indicate that English 30 students are proficient in close reading. They were able to manage difficult texts and questions. The excerpt from “The Most Beautiful House in the World” proved to be the most difficult section of this exam, although the mean difficulty was a respectable 63.4%.

The table below provides information about 8 of the 10 questions on this passage, as reflected in the responses of three student groups.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number									
	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	54	55	
All Students	68.4	83.8	35.9	67.2	61.7	64.7	63.6	53.4	60.5	
Students achieving the standard of excellence (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	86.0	91.3	60.0	86.7	73.2	83.5	90.1	69.5	79.7	
Students achieving the acceptable standard who received between 50% to 64%, or C, on the whole examination	59.3	80.8	23.7	57.5	55.2	54.6	50.6	44.8	51.1	

Passage V, from “*The Most Beautiful House in the World*” by Witold Rybczynski, is a philosophical discussion about the art of architecture. It is written in a formal style and deals with a subject that few students would have experienced directly or indirectly. The first paragraph, while making a simple point, is complex and abstract, full of allusions to other abstract ideas. The second sentence, “Even so, occasionally a problem for which there was no precedent did present itself,” would require more than one reading to decode.

-
46. Historically, the architect was seldom required to invent new design forms because

- A. architects had little formal training
 - B. the functions of buildings rarely changed
 - C. traditional building forms were most popular
 - D. architects resisted the risk involved in experimentation
-

47. A building that would meet with Michael’s approval is **most** likely to be the

- A. office highrise
 - B. modern airport building
 - C. traditional Formentera house
 - D. new capitol building in Virginia
-

48. The narrator’s questions at the end of paragraph 2 indicate that he

- A. rigidly adheres to traditional expectations
 - B. values the critical suggestions of his clients
 - C. is on the verge of setting a precedent in architectural design
 - D. had hitherto taken the need for architectural originality for granted
-

Question 46 is classified as a literal understanding question in terms of cognitive skills, but the writer’s style presents a challenge to understanding. Nevertheless, 68.4% of all students correctly chose alternative B. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 86.0% selected the correct answer. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, (Parts A and B), 59.3% answered correctly.

Question 47 posed little difficulty for any of the group (students achieving A, B, C, or F on the whole examination). There were no line references to guide students in the process of determining “Michael’s approval,” as the question required. Yet, 83.8% of all students answered correctly, indicating that they are proficient readers.

Question 48 was the most difficult question on this reading exam. Students were required not only to understand the “questions” referred to, but to infer, from these, the narrator’s own position on architectural design. The fact that 83.8% of all students correctly answered the previous question suggests that they understood “Michael’s question.” Did students trip on the word “hitherto” in the correct answer D, and miss the past perfect tense of the verb?

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 60.0% chose the correct answer. Many students in this group were drawn to alternatives B and C, which suggests some confusion about the narrator’s stance. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, (Parts A and B), only 23.7% selected the correct answer. As this group was almost equally attracted to alternatives A, B, and C, it would seem that they were guessing.

49. The narrator discovers that the “secret” (line 35) of the appeal of the traditional Formentera houses is based **mainly** on their

- A. comfort and practicality
- B. simplicity and elegance
- C. disguised originality
- D. strategic location

50. The narrator describes the watch towers, the windmill towers, and the fortified church as “rhetorical flourishes” (line 51) because they

- A. are outdated traditions
- B. are practical necessities that are of no consequence
- C. are accents that serve to complement the general tone of the landscape
- D. were constructed by foreigners unfamiliar with the vocabulary of architecture

51. The narrator’s personal and professional background contribute to his perception that the concept of “fit” (lines 34–54) is based on

- A. making comfortable allowances for outsiders
- B. following the guidelines of one’s predecessors
- C. agreeing to allow one’s principles to be compromised
- D. conforming to given needs, circumstances, and expectations

52. The sparse, unadorned style of the poem (lines 60–91) **best** serves to

- A. emphasize the barren simplicity of the island
- B. develop the idea that art is a personal subject
- C. reveal the narrator’s love of history
- D. reflect the narrator’s love of nature

Question 49 required students to choose the **best** answer from alternatives all having a degree of “correctness.” Once again, students had little trouble in recognizing A as the **best** answer: 62.7% of all students answered correctly. Success in this question would definitely require a re-reading of not only line 35, as cited in the question, but of the preceding and following paragraphs. Most students, apparently, made this effort.

Question 50 required students to respond to metaphorical expression and recognize the effect of that expression. Most students (61.7%) were successful. Only a small percentage were misled by alternative A, which offers a literal explanation of “rhetorical flourishes.”

Question 51. Students were directed to re-read a twenty-line paragraph to infer the meaning of “fit,” as derived by the narrator. Again, most were successful. Of those achieving a standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B), 83.5% answered correctly. Of students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 54.6% answered correctly.

Question 52. Results of question 52 suggest that close reading and re-reading correlates highly with success on the whole examination (parts A and B). This evaluation question required students to re-read a thirty-one-line poem within the excerpt. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 90.1% answered correctly. Of those students achieving the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), only 50.6% answered correctly. Many of this last group correctly answered other, more complex questions. Did they choose not to make the effort required here?

54. The shift in the narrator's perspective occurs at

- A. line 13
 - B. line 21
 - C. line 60
 - D. line 92
-

55. The **clearest** statement of the narrator's thesis is

- A. "The twentieth century has seen few successful examples" (lines 9–10)
 - B. "The invention of new building types is a rare occurrence" (line 13)
 - C. "there is more to architecture than the building game" (lines 58–59)
 - D. "it would take time to appreciate its unassuming charms" (lines 100–101)
-

Question 54. For those students who took the time to re-read, as indicated in the alternatives, question 54 would have been straightforward. The writer (narrator) begins the excerpt speculating about the history of architecture. At line 21, he shifts to a personal perspective as he describes his own process of creating a design. Of those students achieving the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), only 44.8% answered correctly. Of this group, 28.6% chose alternative C, line 60, the beginning of the poem, which was a good guess but which does not present a "change of perspective," merely a continuation of the writer's idea.

Question 55. Students are asked to identify the writer's thesis in this evaluation question. Each alternative includes a main idea, but C is the most inclusive of his intentions in this excerpt. Of those students achieving the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 79.7% answered correctly. It is likely that these students managed a quick skim-reading of the passage to verify their choice. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 51.1% answered correctly.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 30 Diploma Examination be considered as separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	12.3	25.2
B	24.5	37.9
C	49.3	27.8
F	13.9	9.1

For further information, contact Gail Gates, Mary Lou Campbell, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.

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